

Notification No. G. 6367—G. M. 276-07-2, dated 2nd May 1908.

The following Resolution No. 3252—3288-3, dated 27th March 1908, of the Government of India in the Department of Commerce and Industry, regarding the limitation of Telegraph work on Sundays, is hereby published for general information.

By Order,

K. MYLAR RAO,

For Secy. to Govt., Gen. & Rev. Depts.

No. 3252—3288-3.

TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT.

Calcutta, the 27th March 1908.

The Government of India have had under their consideration an important recommendation made by the Telegraph Committee regarding the limitation of Telegraph work on Sundays. A Telegraph operator has at present to work regularly on Sundays as part of the ordinary routine of his service, and this liability to Sunday work is felt by the staff to be a substantial hardship. The Government of India are of opinion that the grievance is a real one, and although it is one which cannot be altogether removed, they are anxious to do what is possible to limit its extent. The interest which the public have shown in matters affecting the well-being of the Telegraph staff, leads Government to believe that they will willingly co-operate in any reasonable measure to ameliorate the conditions of service in the Telegraph Department.

2. Telegraph Offices are divided into three classes, first class offices which are open always, second class offices which are open for about fourteen hours, usually from 7 to 21, and third class offices which are open for seven or eight hours only. At present on Sundays and the four chief holidays, viz., Christmas day, New Year's day, Good Friday and King's Birthday, all first class offices are open as on week days; second class offices are usually open for two hours in the morning and five in the afternoon, and third class offices for two hours in the morning and two in the afternoon. The Telegraph Committee were of opinion that while first class offices should remain open from 0 hours to 0 hours, as at present, the working hours of second and third class offices might be considerably restricted. In particular they recommended that in places where there is more than one office, all offices other than the principal one should be entirely closed on Sundays and holidays.

3. The Government of India have ascertained that in the United Kingdom a considerable number of offices are open on Sundays, only for one hour in the morning, and the very great majority only are open in the morning. A few are also open for one hour in the evening, and only the most important offices are open throughout the day. It is the recognized practice, moreover, to keep open only the chief office in towns where there is more than one office. Although the Government of India are not prepared to adopt the English practice in its entirety, they nevertheless consider that it would be desirable that the existing Sunday hours in Indian Telegraph offices should, if possible, be reduced. The following detailed proposals to effect this purpose have been tentatively put forward by the Telegraph Department and the Post Office:—

- (1) That in places where there is more than one office, all offices except the principal one should ordinarily be closed; but that, in the case of a few of the largest towns, one or two of the minor offices which serve outlying localities should also be open for short periods.
- (2) That first class offices should remain open from 0 hours to 0 hours as at present except when the office is in a place where there is more than one office and is not itself the principal office.
- (3) That in places where there is only one office, and the office ordinarily observes second class hours or in places where there is more than one office and the principal office observes second class hours, it should be open in all cases for two hours in the morning (7 to 9) and in the case of the more important offices also for two hours in the evening (16 to 18).
- (4) That in places where there is only one office, the office, if it ordinarily observes third class hours, should be open for two hours only in the morning (7 to 9), and this period should be reduced to one hour in cases where experience shows that this further limitation is possible.

The Government of India, before issuing any orders on the subject, desire that the public, who will be affected by the change in the working hours, should have an opportunity of expressing their opinion.

4. The restriction of the hours of working of second and third class offices would substantially diminish the Sunday work of the Telegraph staff, but a further recommendation has been made by the Telegraph Committee, viz., that on Sundays and holidays inland telegrams at